

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 DOE-11 SOE-02 OES-07 AGRE-00 CA-01 STR-07
EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 /096 W
-----114895 042246Z /72

R 040711Z MAR 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5776
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0468

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IR, IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS

REF: TEHRAN 2064

1. SUMMARY: KHALATBARY VISIT TO IRAQ GOT OFF TO A
SLOW BUT CORDIAL START. ON MARCH 1 HE MET WITH BOTH
BAKR AND HUSSEIN AS WELL AS BEGINNING FORMAL TALKS AT
FOREIGN MINISTRY LEVEL. END SUMMARY

2. IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY ARRIVED
BAGHDAD FEBRUARY 26. AS REPORTED BY IRAQ NEWS AGENCY,
HIS STATEMENT UPON ARRIVAL CONSISTED ONLY OF
GENERALITIES. INA ALSO REPORTED THAT PREPARATORY
COMMITTEES BEGAN WORK ON FEBRUARY 22 AT UNDERSECRETARY
LEVEL. SOME SOURCES BELIEVE THAT PREPARATORY COMMITTEES
HAD NOT COMPLETED AGENDA FOR MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETINGS
AT THE TIME OF KHALATBARY'S ARRIVAL. USINT OFFICER
SPOKE WITH IRANIAN ECONOMY MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY
AHMED KORUS MARCH 1 AND WAS TOLD THAT MEETINGS OF THE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEES HAD BEEN CONCLUDED. COMMITTEES
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COVERED THE FIELDS OF OIL, GAS, AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION,
TRADE AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS.

3. KHALATBARY'S OFFICIAL COUNTERPART IS RCC MEMBER
AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR IZZAT IBRAHIM. IBRAHIM
TOGETHER WITH MINISTER OF TRADE HASSAN ALI PRESIDED
AT OPENING MEETING OF IRAQI-IRANIAN JOINT COMMITTEE

ON MARCH 1. IT APPEARS THAT MEETING WAS LARGELY CEREMONIAL IN CHARACTER AND THAT HARD BARGAINING BEGAN IN MEETING BETWEEN KHALATBARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI THE FOLLOWING DAY. ACCORDING TO STATEMENT ISSUED AFTER MEETING OF TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS, THE DISCUSSIONS REVOLVED AROUND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOLS SIGNED AT ALGIERS IN MARCH 1975. HAMMADI DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE AND USEFUL.

4. KHALATBARY PAID FORMAL CALLS MARCH 1 ON PRESIDENT BAKR AND IRAQI STRONGMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN. IN MEETING WITH BAKR HE CONVEYED GREETINGS AND A GIFT FROM THE SHAH.

5. COMMENT: MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN LAVISH. ATMOSPHERE AT IRANIAN EMBASSY RECEPTION, WELL-ATTENDED BY SENIOR IRAQI OFFICIALS, WAS EXCELLENT. CONSENSUS OF MOST OBSERVERS HERE IS THAT IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS REMAIN GOOD, ON THE SURFACE AT LEAST, AND THAT BOTH SIDES ARE EAGER TO MAKE THESE TALKS A SUCCESS DESPITE DEEP-SEATED MUTUAL SUSPICIONS.
PECK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BAGHDA00468
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780099-1017
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803106/aaaadmlu.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 27507bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 TEHRAN 2064
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3117456
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS
TAGS: PEPR, IR, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/27507bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014